



## Perceptions of heatwave risks to health: Interview-based study of older people in London and Norwich, UK

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### Abstract:

**BACKGROUND:** Most projections of climate change suggest an increased frequency of heatwaves in England over coming decades; older people are at particular risk. This could result in substantial mortality and morbidity. **OBJECTIVE:** To determine elderly people's knowledge and perceptions of heat-related risks to health, and of protective behaviours. **METHODS:** Semi-structured interviews: 73 men and women, 72-94 years, living in their own homes in London and Norwich, UK. **RESULTS:** Few respondents considered themselves either old or at risk from the effects of heat, even though many had some form of relevant chronic illness; they did recognize that some medical conditions might increase risks in others. Most reported that they had taken appropriate steps to reduce the effects of heat. Some respondents considered it appropriate for the government to take responsibility for protecting vulnerable people, but many thought state intervention was unnecessary, intrusive and unlikely to be effective. Respondents were more positive about the value of appropriately disseminated advice and solutions by communities themselves. **CONCLUSION:** The Heatwave Plan should consider giving greater emphasis to a population-based information strategy, using innovative information dissemination methods to increase awareness of vulnerability to heat among the elderly and to ensure clarity about behaviour modification measures.

**Source:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdn102>

### Resource Description

#### Communication: ☒

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

#### Communication Audience: ☒

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional, Policymaker, Researcher

#### Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

# Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Temperature

**Temperature:** Extreme Heat

**Geographic Feature:** ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Urban

**Geographic Location:** ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

**Non-United States:** Europe

**European Region/Country:** European Country

**Other European Country :** England

**Health Impact:** ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Cardiovascular Effect, Morbidity/Mortality, Respiratory Effect, Urologic Effect

**Medical Community Engagement:** ☒

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

**Mitigation/Adaptation:** ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

**Population of Concern:** A focus of content

**Population of Concern:** ☒

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Elderly

**Resource Type:** ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

**Timescale:** ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

**Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:** ☒



resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content